

SAFETY BULLETIN

SB02-037
Cell Phone Safety

The Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association estimates that there are currently 120.1 million cell phones in operation in the United States, and a recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) survey found that nearly 75 percent of drivers reported using their cell phones while driving. Using cell phones while operating a motor vehicle has been compared to driving while intoxicated. This is just one of the reasons that the General Service Administration (GSA) has issued GSA Bulletin FMB B-2, which highly discourages cell phone usage while operating an Army Motor Vehicle. In addition, studies have shown that driver distractions due to cell phone usage occurs whether a "hands free" or a hand held phone is used. The usage of a "hands free" kit will free up your hands for steering however, they will not increase your attention to the road and traffic ahead. AR 190-5, Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision and FR Reg 190-5, Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision and Installation Traffic Code, both state that using headphones or earphones is prohibited while operating any vehicles on Army property, so some hands free methods are prohibited.

According to NHTSA a person that uses a cell phone while they are driving is four times more likely to have an auto accident. Do the right thing: pull into a parking lot or call the person back when you can do so safely. Become part of the solution. Following these cell phone safety tips can reduce the probability of you having a cell phone related auto accident. Remember that your attention should be focused on driving that 2000-pound vehicle. Just ask yourself, is the phone call worth an injury or worse?

Another area of cell phone safety that is too often overlooked is the location in which we carry and use the phone. We rarely think that a cell phone could present a fire or explosion hazard but they can. The phones are not designed for hazardous locations and could create a spark that can cause an incident. Most cell phone manuals inform users that the phone should not be used in hazardous locations and give refueling your car as an example. The increased concern of cell phone related fires has prompted some suppliers to post warnings on fuel pumps that inform the patron that they need to turn off their cell phone.

Cellular Phone Safety Tips:

- Know the features of your cell phone
- Pull off the road to use the phone
- Use speed or voice dialing
- Use a hands free systems (when authorized)
- Let a passenger dial the phone
- Let the person that you are talking with know that you are driving and that you will call back when it is safe.
- Never take notes while driving
- Let your voice mail take the call
- Be a cellular Samaritan and help others in need
- Do not use your cell phone in hazardous locations such as chemical storage areas
- Do not use your cell phone while getting gas, the vapors are flammable